# COMMAND PRESENCE:
## WHERE SHOULD THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER BE LOCATED ON THE MODERN BATTLEFIELD?

A Monograph

by

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Field Artillery

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This paper examines the location of the operational commander on the battlefield during the 20th century. It focuses on where he could be found during the fight, the techniques he used to develop and issue orders, and how he insured his subordinates understood and complied with his instructions. Then, it draws conclusions as to where the operational commander should be located on the high-intensity, battlefield of the early 21st century.

A comparative analysis of six World War II generals is conducted to determine their methods of command and control. The results of a study commissioned by the Army are reviewed. Doctrine is discussed and warfare in the early 21st century is examined. Finally, recommendations with regard to the location and activities of the commander are discussed.

The paper concludes with several points. First, the commander needs to command as far forward as practical. (continued on other side of form)

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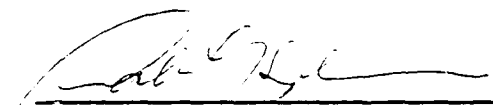Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.
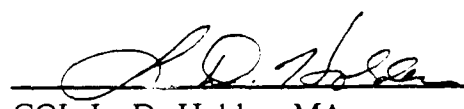
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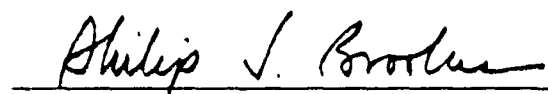
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# ABSTRACT

COMMAND PRESENCE: WHERE SHOULD THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER BE LOCATED ON THE MODERN BATTLEFIELD? by Major H.L. Ware, III, USA, 46 pages.

This paper examines the location of the operational commander on the battlefield during the 20th century. It focuses on where he could be found during the fight, the techniques he used to develop and issue orders, and how he insured his subordinates understood and complied with his instructions. Then, it draws conclusions as to where the operational commander should be located on the high-intensity battlefield of the early 21st century.

A comparative analysis of six World War II generals is conducted to determine their methods of command and control. The results of a study commissioned by the Army are examined. Doctrine is discussed and warfare in the early 21st century is examined. Finally, recommendations with regard to the location and activities of the commander are discussed.

The paper concludes with several points. First, the commander needs to command as far forward as practical. He should spend most of his time either with his subordinate commanders or at his Tactical Command Post. He should use a system of liaison officers to serve as his "directed telescope." Finally, he must make decisions based on his staff's recommendations, his own observations and analysis, and his "sixth sense" or his coup d'oeil.

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## INTRODUCTION

Gone forever are those classical days of warfare when the general, mounted on his favorite steed, would observe his army from a hilltop as it clashed with the enemy on the battlefield below. At the decisive point, he could send in his reserve to crush his enemy. All else failing, he could charge into the battle, rally his forces with his presence, and win a great victory. Since then, soldiers' weapons have evolved from pikes and bows to automatic assault rifles and antitank guided missiles. As a result of enhanced mobility, armies of foot soldiers no longer clash head on with their enemy, but armored forces conduct sweeping encirclements to surround and destroy their foe. However, while armies have evolved and technologies have changed, the role of the general remains the same. He must command and control his army.

The industrial revolution changed the implements of land warfare throughout the 19th century. Metallurgical innovations and improved bullet design transformed the individual soldier's weapon from a musket into a bolt-operated, magazine-fed rifle. Breechloading, rifled artillery fired new high-explosive shells. Increased range and improved rates of fire made artillery more lethal than ever before. By the end of World War I, the belt-fed, recoil-operated machine gun had become one of the most

significant advances in lethality since the invention of gunpowder. [1]

Other technological innovations contributed to enhance military capabilities. Improved socio-economic standards, advances in medicine, modern farming methods, and food preservation techniques led to larger populations and larger armies. Advances in mass production through the use of coal, steam, oil, and electric energy powered the factories that supplied and equipped these large armed forces. Likewise, improved transportation moved them.

While the rail system mobilized the world for war in 1914, it was the internal combustion engine that revolutionized warfare of the 20th century. The truck and the tank opened the battlefield to maneuver and mobility, while the airplane added a new dimension to warfare.

During the 19th and 20th centuries. the invention and improvement of electronic communications have been most beneficial to the commander. For as the size of armies and the ability to campaign over vast territory has increased, the operational commander's ability to see the whole battlefield has been reduced. Electronic devices have enabled him to command and control his forces in this expanded air and land environment. World War I commanders relied on telephones and crude first-generation radios. World War II commanders had telephones, radios, crypto-

devices, and teletype.  Modern commanders have these, plus satellite, digital, and secure communications, computers and tele-fax machines.

If the general's role remains to command and control his forces, how does he do it in the modern era?  This paper looks at how operational commanders have commanded and controlled their armies thus far in the twentieth century. Specifically, it focuses on where the commander was located on the battlefield, the techniques he used to develop and issue orders, and how he insured his subordinates understood and complied with his instructions.  However, more important than the historical perspective, is the final recommendation as to the most practical place from which the operational commander can best command and control his forces on the complex and automated battlefield of the future.

METHODOLOGY

Following a brief look at operational level command and control during the First World War, I will briefly discuss pre-World War II doctrine as it applies to command and control, and to the commander's location on the battlefield. This doctrinal review will cover American, German, and British doctrine to set the stage for the next section of the paper.  Then, using a sampling of World War II army and army group commanders, I will discuss their philosophies of command and control, their locations on the battlefield

during operations, and the organization of their headquarters into command posts. The fourth section of the paper will discuss the results of a study conducted by the Franklin Institute Research Laboratory commissioned by the Department of the Army in 1966. The results of this study will provide some post-World War II opinions as to the subject at hand. After a short AirLand battle doctrine review, I will look at warfare at the beginning of the 21st century on the European battlefield. I will then conclude with a recommendation as to how a large unit commander should control his organization and from where he should do it.

Before going further, I must clear up several points. The first is the definition of operational level commander as it relates to this paper. FM 100-5, Operations, defines operational art:

> ... the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations. [2]

Possibly, all of the generals studied in this paper do not qualify as operational commanders in accordance with this definition. However, what is important for this study is the fact that all of these men commanded at echelons above corps. They all faced the problems involved in commanding and controlling large units.

Several of the generals studied published their views on command and control as army group and army commanders.

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Montgomery and Patton are two that did. However, in those other cases, the philosophies of the general being studied may be the opinion of a colleague, another author, or myself Likewise, what is reported in this paper may be an observed command style that the general used throughout his career regardless of his level of command.

Finally, it is very difficult to separate the leadership style of a commander from his command and control techniques. What the reader of this paper must keep in mind is that I am not studying the whole man, but trying to find a common thread as to where the operational or large unit commander should be positioned, what he should be doing, and how he synchronizes all of the activities on the battlefield.

WORLD WAR I

World War I ushered in the era of the "chateau" generals. Operational commanders like Colonel-General Helmuth J. L. von Moltke and Field Marshall Douglas Haig commanded their forces in the security of the rear from plush palatial headquarters. During this war, the senior commander's dependence on the telephone drew subordinates to the rear in order to discuss the situation and current operations with their higher level commanders. The telephone managed to finally get commanders and their staffs off the front-lines and into the rear. According to J.F.C.

Fuller, the allied general:

> ...became more and more bound to his office, and
> consequently divorced from his men, he relied for
> contact not upon the personal factor, but upon the
> mechanical telegraph and telephone.  They could
> establish contact, but they could accomplish this
> only by dragging subordinate commanders out of the
> firing line, or more often persuading them not to
> go into it, so that they might be at the beck and
> call of their superiors.  In the World War nothing
> was more dreadful to witness than a chain of men
> starting with a battalion commander and ending
> with an army commander sitting in telephone boxes,
> improvised or actual...talking, in place of
> leading. [3]

On the German side, Moltke, Chief of the General Staff

since 1905, had not commanded troops for many years.  During

the war he did not visit the front.  General von Mellenthin

believed that Moltke had:

> ...no notion of what actually happened in battle,
> or of the troops capabilities and [their]
> difficulties....He did not truly command but
> groped about in circumstances that were
> unintelligible to him." [4]

Correlli Barnett depicts Moltke's dilemma during the battles

along the Belgian frontier:

> He could not discuss the victory in person with
> his army commanders; a bellowed telephone
> conversation over a bad line was no substitute for
> the direct contact of minds and personalities and
> indeed was never tried by Moltke.  There remained
> coded telegrams and radio signals, naturally kept
> brief as possible.  Moltke and his battle captains
> were like deaf men with poor ear trumpets trying
> to carry out a complex technical discussion. [5]

In essence, technology transformed the general from the

office soldier.  He became a telephone operator and a

mechanical presser of buttons. [6]  The problem was

that he was commanding soldiers, not robots.


PRE-WORLD WAR II DOCTRINE


## American


If "Chateau" generalship had ever existed in the U.S.

Army, it should have been eradicated by the time the United

States entered World War II.   Revised for the first time in

16 years, FM 100-5, Tentative Field Service Regulation,

Operations, written in 1939, discussed the inseparability of

command and leadership.   It also discussed the commander's

responsibilities to his command in the physical and moral

domains.   Specifically:

> In the exercise of his command functions, the
> commander should keep in close touch with all
> subordinate units by means of personal visits and
> observation.   It is essential that he know from
> personal contact the mental, moral, and physical
> state of his troops. [7]

> The personal influence of the commander on the
> troops is of the utmost importance...He must be
> near his troops when they are engaged in
> combat...During the decisive phase of battle, the
> place of the commander is near the critical point
> of action.   He should remain until he is assured
> that his orders and intentions are understood and
>
> that the subordinate commander has taken proper
> measures for their execution. [8]


To control his forces during the battle, the regulation

states:

> Having issued his orders, the commander places
> himself where he can best control the course of
> action and exert his leadership.   His command post

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affords the advantage of complete communication
and control of his unit as a whole. However, when
the opportunity offers and when his presence at
the command post is not urgently required, he
visits his subordinate commanders and his troops
in order to inspire confidence and to assure
himself that his orders are understood and
properly executed. [9]

With regard to the unit's command post, the headquarters

of a large unit should be divided into a forward and rear

echelon. The forward element is the smaller of the two,

with only the staff elements required to assist the commander

in controlling the battle. It serves as the command post.

The rear echelon is made up of the remainder of the

headquarters. The position of the command post is dictated

by troop dispositions, routes of communications, cover and

concealment, signal communications requirements, and space

requirements. Placing the command post in a remote location

is discouraged for several reasons. One significant reason

"is that the commander and his staff lack full knowledge of

the terrain and the progress of operations." [10]

The 1939 regulation was finalized in 1941 as FM 100-5,

Field Service Regulation, Operations. The commander's

responsibilities remained unchanged.

## German

Traditionally advocates of maneuver warfare, it is not

surprising that German Army doctrine valued front line

leadership. Prior to the end of World War I, a German

training directive identified the location of a senior leader on the battlefield. "The greater the mobility of the attack the further forward is the proper place of senior commanders, often on horseback." [11]

Refined German doctrine of the 1930s stressed front line leadership. The 1936 version of Truppenfuehrung (Command of Troops) reflected the importance of front-line senior level leadership:

> Personal influence by the commanding officer on his troops is of the greatest importance. He must be located near the fighting troops.
>
> A divisional commander's place is with his troops...During encounters with the enemy seeing for oneself is best.
>
> Commanders are to live with the troops and share with them danger, deprivation, happiness, and suffering. Only thus can they gain a real insight into their troops' combat power and requirements.
>
> The example of officers and men in commanding positions has a crucial effect on the troops. The officer who demonstrates cold-bloodedness, determination, and courage in front of the enemy pulls the troops along with himself. [12]

It is not surprising that German generals took this doctrine to heart. Their attitude toward combat had already been shaped as junior officers during World War I.

## British

While not as explicit as American or German doctrine, the Royal Army, Field Service Regulations of 1935 provided the subordinate commander with steps to follow upon receipt

of a mission. Those steps relevant to this discussion are:

To make certain that he understands his orders....

To reconnoitre the ground, so far as time will
permit....

To communicate his plan to his subordinates...by
clear and concise verbal orders....

To place himself where he can best control the
course of the action, remembering that at the
crisis[,] personal example and leadership are the
best means to ensure success. [13]

## Summary

While none of the doctrines discussed above were written
specifically to establish procedures for large unit command
and control, it is clear that all three armies believed that
the leader's place was at the decisive point of the battle.
American and German doctrine stressed the need for front-
line leadership. British doctrine focused on the use of
verbal orders.

## THE GENERALS

This section is an historical look at the command
philosophies of six World War II generals. The sample
consists of Generals Omar N. Bradley, George S. Patton,
and Heinz Guderian and Field Marshals Bernard L. Montgomery,
Erwin Rommel, and Erich von Manstein. Each of these
generals commanded at the army level, and some commanded
army groups. Also, each is instantly recognizable to the
military community as a great captain of World War II.

## General Omar N. Bradley

Like many other U.S. generals of the World War II era,
General Omar N. Bradley went quickly from relative obscurity
to fame. However, unlike others, he eventually commanded
the largest all American field command in U.S. history
and after the war became the first Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff. [14] After commanding the 82nd and
28th Divisions, he assumed command of II Corps in North
Africa during April 1943. At the conclusion of the North
African Campaign and the Sicily invasion, Bradley went to
England where he assumed command of 1st U.S. Army and
prepared for the Normandy invasion. On 14 July 1944, 12th
U.S. Army Group was born; General Bradley remained its only
commander throughout the war.

Key to Bradley's philosophy of command was his
relationship to his subordinates:

> From General Marshall I learned the rudiments
> of effective command. Throughout the war I
> deliberately avoided intervening in a subor-
> dinate's duties. When an officer performed as I
> expected him to, I gave him a free hand. When he
> hesitated, I tried to help him. And when he
> failed, I relieved him. [15]

While in North Africa, Bradley refined his philosophy of
effective command that he used as an army and army group
commander:

> The Corps Commander must know his division
> commanders, he must thoroughly understand their
> problems, respect their judgment, and be tolerant
> of their limitations. For there are few

distinguishing characteristics of a successful
division commander. Success comes instead from a
well-balanced combination of good judgment,
self-confidence, leadership, and boldness. [16]

In North Africa, Bradley also grappled with the
commander's need for information versus the best location
for the commander to receive it. He did not like to be at
the front because he feared that he would miss the majority
of the battle information coming into his command post. At
the command post he could best monitor the majority of the
battlefield activity and be in a position to make necessary
decisions in a timely manner. Once he was satisfied with a
plan and issued the order, General Bradley trusted his
subordinates to execute it. [17] Therefore, his presence
at the front was not necessary.

By recognizing that his place as the commander was at
the command post does not mean that Bradley lost touch with
his soldiers. In A Soldier's Story, Bradley says:

> ...because war is as much a conflict of passion as
> it is of force, no commander can become a strategist
> until first he knows his men. Far from being a
> handicap to command, compassion is the measure for
> it. For unless one values the lives of his soldiers
> and is tormented by their ordeals, he is unfit to
> command. He is unfit to appraise the cost of an
> objective in terms of human life. [18]

In summary, Bradley was most comfortable at either his
command post or that of a major subordinate during corps or
army-level operations. As an army group commander, he spent
even more time at his tactical command post. He visited

troops normally during a lull in battle.  As he progressed
in levels of command, he spent more time working on future
operations.  During the Battle of the Bulge, he had half his
staff dealing with that current operation, while the other
half planned the Rhine River crossings.  He made most of his
decisions with his chief of staff or G-3 in his private van.
Prior to the Battle of the Bulge, his command post was 12
miles from German lines.  After the Bulge, his tactical
command post was rarely within 50 miles of the front. [19]

## General George S. Patton, Jr.

The most colorful American general of World War II,
George S. Patton, Jr. fought Rommel in North Africa as the
commander of II Corps, captured Palermo, Sicily before
Montgomery at the head of 7th U.S. Army, raced his famed 3rd
U.S. Army across northern France in the summer of 1944, and
played a major role in the Battle of the Bulge by January
1945.

Patton expected his subordinates to lead from the front
as can be seen from his 3rd U.S. Army, "Letter of
Instruction No. 1":

>     Each, in his appropriate sphere, will lead in
>     person.  Any commander who fails to obtain his
>     objective, and who is not dead or severely
>     wounded, has not done his full duty.
>
>     In carrying out a mission, the promulgation of the
>     order represents not over 10 per cent of your
>     responsibility   The remaining 90 per cent

consists in assuring by means of personal
supervision on the ground, by yourself and your
staff, proper and vigorous execution. [20]

Additionally, Patton made it very clear that he expected

the commander or the chief of staff, and one member of each

staff section to visit the front daily. He directed that

the chief of staff would designate the sector that each

would visit to avoid duplication of effort. The letter of

instruction continues by stating:

> The function of these officers is to observe, not
> meddle. In addition to their own specialty, they
> must observe and report anything of military
> importance. Remember that praise is more
> important than blame. Remember too that your
> primary mission as a leader is to see with your
> own eyes and be seen by your troops while engaged
> in personal reconnaissance. [21]

At his daily staff conferences, Patton expected those staff

officers who had most recently returned from the front to

report their observations.

In Third Army the daily staff briefing took place at the

main command post at 0830. While the routine would be

easily recognizable to us today, the important decisions

were already made:

> At around 0800 every day Patton held a meeting
> with key members of his staff to have an exchange
> of ideas. Included in this informal meeting were
> the Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-2,
> Assistant G-2, G-3, Chief of Staff XIX TAC, and
> Patton. It was at this meeting that Patton
> usually made key decisions about impending
> operations, and the visibility and representation
> of the G-2 section is indicative of Patton's
> interest in intelligence matters in planning and
> making decisions." [22]

Patton organized his headquarters in accordance with the field service regulations in that it was divided into two echelons. "Letter of Instruction No. 1" discusses the forward command post:

> The further forward the Command Posts are located, the less time is wasted in driving to and from the front. The ideal situation would be for the Army Command Post to be within one-half hour's drive in a C&R car of the Division Command Post. The driving time to the front from the Command Post of the lower units should be correspondingly shorter.
>
> Much time and wire is saved if Command Posts of higher units are at or near one of the Command Posts of the next lower echelon.
>
> All [forward] Command Posts...should be kept as small and mobile as possible with the minimum amount of radio traffic. [23]

Finally, Patton's theory of command was that a commander should not rob a subordinate of his initiative by over-controlling him. He insisted that subordinates be told what to do, but not how to do it. He felt that a general should command one level down, but know the location of units two levels down. Patton believed this principle applied all the way down the hierarchy of command. He felt that if a commander posted on his own map locations of units three or four echelons down, he would soon fall into the habit of commanding those units and lose efficiency. In reality, Patton was unable to adhere to his own principle. Many times he instructed division commanders to send combat commands or regiments on specific missions. In his defense, Patton believed that it was his responsiblity to give

on-the-spot orders when the situation called for it. [24]

## Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery

Probably best remembered by most Americans as George C. Scott's British antagonist in the movie Patton, Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery's military career spanned four decades. A distinguished World War I veteran, he commanded a division in France during the early stages of World War II and forced Rommel out of Eygpt after the Battle of El-Alamein. He commanded 8th Army in Italy and led the 21st Army Group to victory across northern France, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Germany. The author of a number of theoretical and historical works on warfare, his philosophy on leadership is well documented.

In 1945 as the 21st Army Group commander, Montgomery published the fourth in a series of pamphlets for the forces under his command. This last pamphlet, "High Command in War," lays out Montgomery's philosophy of large unit command and control. While Montgomery discusses the moral and cybernetic domain of generalship in this pamphlet, what is most relevant to this paper are his views on the organization for command and control, and his method of exercising command.

Montgomery believed that a higher commander's headquarters in the field must be organized into three

elements. The first of which is the Tactical Headquarters or the Tac. In Monty's own words, the Tac:

> ...is the headquarters from which the commander exercises personal command and control of the battle. It must be small and highly efficient, completely mobile on its own transport, and self-contained in regards [to] defence; it consists chiefly of signals, cipher, liaison staff, defence troops, with a very small operations staff for keeping in touch with the battle situation. [25]

The 21st Army Group's Tac consisted of about 50 officers, 600 enlisted men, and 200 vehicles. About one-half of the enlisted personnel were defense forces. Additionally, the army group Tac must be located well forward; it should be near the headquarters of one of the field armies. Electronic means of communication, wire or secure radio, between the Tac and the Main Headquarters (Main) is essential.

The Tac is also the headquarters from which Field Marshal Montgomery worked. He believed that an Army Group or Army commander should live at the Tac permanently, even in the event that the Tac and the Main are close together. By living at the Tac, the commander can "keep clear of details, and give him some security from visitors; only in this way will he have time for quiet thought and reflection." [26] Finally, the only orders issued from the Tac are those given by the army group commander to his army commanders. These orders are verbal orders and "are never confirmed in writing." [27]

The other two headquarters elements, the Main and the

Rear Headquarters (Rear), were much larger organizations

where staff work took place:

> Main HQ is the central core of the whole
> headquarter[s] organization. The C-in-C gives
> verbal orders from Tac HQ; the staff work
> consequent on those orders is done at the Main and
> Rear.

> In a large force of a million men, or more, the
> volume of this staff work is immense. It follows
> that Main HQ is a large HQ, and cannot be moved
> rapidly. [28]

The Rear was the administrative element of the headquarters

organization. There the logistical and administrative

functions took place. The Chief Administrative Officer and

the Chief of Staff lived at the Main.

Montgomery's style of command required his subordinate

commanders and his staff to work and act on verbal

instructions. He believed that there was too much paper in

circulation throughout the Army (British Army) as a whole

and that a commander could not read all this paperwork and

do his job properly. Nor did Montgomery believe that the

commander could spend all of his time at the Tac:

> Operational command in the field must be direct
> and personal, by means of visits to subordinate
> HQ, where orders are given verbally. It is quite
> unnecessary to confirm these orders in writing...A
> commander must know in what way to give verbal
> orders to his subordinates. No two commanders are
> the same; each will require different treatment. [29]

Lastly, an essential feature in his method of command was

his system of liaison officers. These officers implemented

his "directed telescope" as they toured the battlefield;

visited subordinate headquarters down to division, sometimes lower, and reported their observations to the commander daily. Thus Montgomery used a mix of personal visits and "directed telescope" to keep in touch with his subordinate units, while he spent most of his time at his Tac.

## Field Marshal Erwin Rommel

Most famous for his exploits as the Commander of the Afrika Korps, the "Desert Fox" is also known as the master of mobile warfare. Having never commanded armored forces until he assumed command of the 7th Panzer Division in 1940, he quickly foresaw the capabilities of mechanized and armored forces in the offensive role. As the Commander of Afrika Korps, Panzer Army, and Army Group Afrika, North Africa became the background for his greatest successes.

While one could easily list many exciting vignettes that would illuminate the leadership style of Rommel, my approach to analyzing Field Marshal Rommel is different than the other generals discussed in this paper. As part of a mid-sixties study, several German general officers associated with Rommel were interviewed and asked specific questions about his command style. Therefore, this section contains the observations of General Alfred Gause, who served as Rommel's Chief of Staff for Panzer Group Afrika, Army Group Africa, and in France Army Group "B", General

F. W. von Mellenthin, and General Siegfried Westphal. [30]
One problem is that the study results do not differentiate
between the various levels of command.  However, it does
present a clear picture of Rommel the commander.

When asked where Rommel stationed himself during the
planning phase of operations, Generals von Mellenthin and
Westphal stated that his position was divided between his
command post and the front.  General Gause said that there
were no "phases" of planning.  Planning..."took place
constantly, during daily conversations, during trips to the
front and during lunch or dinner which I usually took with
the Field Marshal." [31]

Once decisions were made, normally by Rommel himself with
very little input from his subordinate commanders, Rommel
went immediately to the front for a personal terrain
reconnaissance.  During this time, his staff developed the
detailed orders.  All three generals agreed that Rommel
normally issued oral orders to his subordinate commanders.
These orders were often transmitted through personal visits,
but could also be transmitted by radio or through liaison
officers.  Frequently, operation orders were preceded with
fragmentary orders.  Once issued, operation orders were
normally confirmed in writing. [32]

With regard to the location of his headquarters, Rommel
used a main and advanced command post.  The main command

post was located far enough from the main battle line that
Rommel could feel secure from enemy commando actions, or
from two to ten kilometers to the rear. The advanced
command post was located near the front line. General Gause
stated:

> ...there was no <u>static</u> advanced Command Post. At the
> point of main effort, Rommel led flexibly together
> with the Chief of Staff and a few messenger
> officers. The group moved in one or two standard
> command cars and 5-6 Volkswagens. It was followed
> by 14-15 motorized radio stations which maintained
> contact with the Command Posts of the Afrika
> Corps, Italian Corps and some divisions. German
> liaison officers with radios were attached to
> Italian Corps and Divisions. [33]

During operations Field Marshal Rommel was always at the
front. He "was always at the point where key action
occurred," says General von Mellenthin. [34] Personal
observation of critical actions was a guiding principle for
Rommel:

> Since his decisions were based on personal
> observation, no time was lost in waiting for
> reports. But decisions were not based solely on
> personal observations -- radio reports were
> considered. [35]

Rommel left the command post at "about 0500 hours daily
after giving orders for the day," or "after receipt of first
reports of action." Every unit and every man knew that in
the most difficult situations the Field Marshal would
appear, "no matter how heavy the fire." [36] While at the
front, Rommel frequently interfered in the conduct of
subordinate unit operations. However, he always assumed
responsibility for the results. Occasionally, Rommel lost

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touch with his staff. General Westphal recounts, "actually from time to time Rommel was out of touch with the Command Post and even the Chief of Staff, on reconnaissance or staff visits. On one occasion 4 days." Finally, Rommel never used senior staff officers to assist in observing the action of major subordinate commanders in a "directed telescope" mode. General Gause says, "that this was the task of German liaison officers." General Westphal says that it was unnecessary because "Rommel was constantly roaming." [37]

## Field Marshal Erich von Manstein

Identified as "the ablest of all German generals" by B. H. Liddell Hart, Manstein has received considerable praise for the conduct of his campaigns during World War II. [38] He played a significant role in finalizing the invasion plan of the West in 1940, led a corps across northwest France in 1940, commanded a Panzer corps in Russia in 1941 and eventually rose to command an army group before being dismissed by Hitler in 1943. His mastery of military matters began a long time prior to the outbreak of World War II. [39]

Campaigning in Western France in 1940, Manstein found it necessary to lead from the front of his forces to obtain intelligence and to make decisions. This was crucial to 38th Corps during pursuit operations, for Manstein pushed the troops forward when the 38th Corps' commanders may have

allowed a pause. As the commander of an armored corps, he also found a need to be at the front because of the fast tempo of his operations. It can be argued then, that the size of his command, two or three divisions, permitted him to control offensive operations from near the front. During the Crimean campaign he began to spend more time in his command post. By then he commanded seven divisions or more. When at army and army group level he visited the front, but most decision-making was accomplished with his staff in a command post. At the tactical level he preferred to lead from the front. At the operational level he found it necessary to step back from a portion or all of the front line to get a better "view" of operations from his general staff officers. Manstein commented that as a corps commander he often questioned his commanders' intent and their views on future operations. As an army commander he saw the need to spend more time planning and outlining future operations. At army group level he was concerned with operations covering over hundreds of miles and numerous subordinate formations. The better he focused on the future, the more exact he expressed his intent to his subordinate commanders. The actions of his panzer commanders in the battles for Kursk imply that they all knew what Mainstein wanted them to accomplish. [40]

Manstein wrote a lot about leading from the front. However, like General Bradley, when commanding at the army

group level, he normally operated from his forward tactical command post. He realized that when he visited the front, he turned control of the battle over to his staff. Knowing this, he was often at the schwerpunkt to make the key decisions.

## General Heinz Guderian

General Guderian was in a unique situation to conduct operations in accordance with the doctrine that he helped develop prior to World War II. Although, he eventually served as Chief of the General Staff, he commanded three corps, and the Second Panzer Army. As the commander of these organizations during the major campaigns in Poland, Flanders, and Russia he turned theory into practice. His biographer, Kenneth Macksey says:

> Guderian was that rare combination of a man of ideas equipped with the ability and verve to turn inspiration into reality. No other general in the Second World War--and few in history--managed to impress so wide and intrinsic a change upon the military art in so short a time, and left such a trail of controversy in his wake. [41]

Guderian's first principle of command and control was that the commander must lead from the front. "By going forward he set the example; he virtually forced his subordinate corps, division, and regimental commanders to go forward a'so." [42] One technique was to meet with subordinate commanders at their forward command posts. At

these locations he would discuss the current situation and future plans using their operations maps. Additionally, by positioning himself at the critical point on the battlefield, he could obtain critical information first hand. Otherwise he would have to wait for it to reach his command post via regiment to division to corps.

In his book, _Panzer Leader_, Guderian makes it clear that he spent little time at his main command post:

> During critical battles around Smolensk, for instance, during which Guderian's and Hoth's panzer groups encircled more than ten Russian divisions and 2000 tanks, Guderian was absent from his panzer group headquarters for twenty-two hours. [43]

To Guderian, it was necessary to operate from a small, mobile forward command post. Mobility and speed were of the essence in order to keep up with the fast moving armored forces and his need to remain with the _schwerpunkt_. Guderian's command staff at the beginning of the Russian Campaign consisted of two armored wireless trucks, a number of cross country vehicles, some motorcyclists, and a light observation plane. [44] The plane was frequently used to transport the general to the critical point on the battlefield.

The final element in Guderian's command and control system was his need for secure wireless communications linking his headquarters to his subordinates. He saw wireless communications as the only way an army commander

could control some 300,000 men and up to thirteen divisions when his presence was required at the front. [45]

Guderian commanded and controlled corps the same way he controlled divisions. He led from the front, utilized a small and mobile forward command post, and relied on secure wireless communications to link the elements of his command into a whole.

## Summary

In addition to following the basic tenets of their respective doctrines with regard to command and control of their forces, these commanders shared several common beliefs. All were sensitive of their moral obligation to their soldiers. More than superficial visits with their soldiers, these commanders recognized the need for their soldiers to see them as competent and brave men who truly understood the trials and tribulations of the soldier on the front-lines. To stay close to their soldiers, maintain communications with all concerned, and keep their finger on the pulse of the battle, they worked from small forward command posts. The Chief of Staff controlled the remainder of the headquarters elsewhere. Finally, they believed in making personal reconnaissance of the battlefield in the development of plans and knew when to make decisions either with or without adequate intelligence.

ART & REQUIREMENTS OF COMMAND STUDY

The Franklin Institute Research Laboratories completed
a study on the subject of generalship in 1967. The study
was commissioned by the Army to accomplish several
objectives, one of which was to "document the principles
and techniques of command by means of [developing] a
composite portrait of the commander in the command
process." [46]

One part of the Franklin Institute's study was the
development and use of a "generalship" questionnaire. This
questionnaire asked specific questions concerning the
location of the commander on the battlefield, and his
activities during the planning and conduct of operations.
The questionnaire was mailed to retired general officers.
Of the more than 80 responses to the questionnaire, eleven
respondents had been army or higher level commanders, and
two had been Army Chief of Staff. A synopsis of General
Ridgway's answers to the questionnaire are provided to
show the quality of the responses obtained by the
questionnaire. Also, General Ridgway's questionnaire is
presented because he was the only respondent who had combat
experience as an operational level commander in a post-World
War II environment.

General Matthew B. Ridgway needs no introduction to soldiers, for he served as the Commanding General, Eighth U.S. Army; Supreme Commander for Allied Powers; Commander-in-Chief, Far East; Supreme Allied Commander Europe; and Army Chief of Staff. During the planning of an operation, General Ridgway held conferences with his primary staff and was then available to his staff. When time was available he personally visited with his staff section chiefs "to give them the opportunity to to tell [him] their troubles." [47] However, once an operation started, Ridgway believed:

> The place of the commander of any unit is where he
> anticipates the crisis of action will occur. In
> the case of the division this is usually easy, in
> the case of the corps and up, you must choose
> what you regard as the most critical, and a have a
> representative at the other spots. [48]

General Ridgway determined the critical place and time of an operation:

> ...by living with the developing situation day
> and night, daily visits to major subordinate
> commanders, intense and unrelenting study of the
> terrain by map and whenever possible by terrain
> reconnaissance on the ground or from the air, and
> an intense study of all available intelligence. [49]

When out of the headquarters, Ridgway kept in touch with his Chief of Staff by any means available. In the event that he could not be contacted by the Chief of Staff, the Chief had full authority to issue orders. This was standard operating procedure in Ridgway's command. Finally, Ridgway always sought the disposition of his troops and the status of supply through his own ceaseless visits and inspections. [50]

Another part of the Franklin Institute's study that is relevant to this paper, was an historical analysis. [51] The object of this part of the study was to build a composite command portrait based on the study of several past commanders. Commanders were chosen based on a wide acknowledgement of their being superior commanders and an availability of resource data. Additionally, some of the commanders were chosen because former colleagues were available for interviews. Some of the twentieth century commanders studied include: Omar Bradley, Mark Clark, Douglas MacArthur, Hasso Von Manteuffel, George S. Patton, Jr., Erwin Rommel, and Joseph Stilwell. While one can easily undermine any study by challenging its statistical credibility and the assumptions upon which it is based, my purpose in reporting the results of this historical analysis in this paper is to provide another source of information from which to draw conclusions.

The results of the Franklin Institute's generalship questionnaire and historical analysis give us the following portrait of an operational commander. [52]

The location of the general will vary throughout an operation. He will remain in his command post during the period in which orders are formulated. However, he will leave as soon as practicable to reconnoiter the combat area and visit subordinate units. The helicopter makes this task

much easier. Normally, he will travel with a small group of officers and will maintain communications with the headquarters at all times. During the actual operation, he will move well forward and attempt to be at the decisive point of the battle. Here he will evaluate the battle based on his own evaluations and attempt to influence its outcome through the use of air, artillery, or reserves, if necessary. Despite his movement on the battlefield, he will always attempt to keep his Chief of Staff informed of new or ammended orders. This task has been made easier due to improved radio communications. When possible, the commander will locate his advanced or tactical command post near the headquarters of the subordinate unit conducting the main effort. This positioning will facilitate the issuing of orders and the flow of information.

The higher the headquarters, the greater the likelihood that complete, written orders will be issued. Normally, warning orders and fragmentary orders will be issued, as appropriate. While the commander will frequently issue the written order to his subordinate commanders personally, orders will be issued by whatever means available. The commander will insist upon written confirmation of all verbal orders upon returning to the command post.

As for command relationships, the commander will maintain a direct relationship with his subordinate commanders through visits to the front-line units and

meetings at his command post. But, he will also use his staff as a link between himself and his subordinate commanders. To supervise the organization's operations, the commander will use personal observation and, possibly, liaison officers (directed telescope). It should be noted that the commander will do his best to issue mission-type orders and not tell his subordinates "how" to accomplish their missions. The commander's relationship with the Chief of Staff will normally be a close one, for he will depend on the Chief to insure the smooth and efficient running of his combat organization, especially the staff.

As for the organization of his headquarters, the commander will have at least a main and forward/tactical command post. He may have a rear command post that provides combat support and administrative functions. The Chief of Staff will normally remain at the main command post and coordinate the activities of the preponderance of the staff. The forward/tactical command post will be manned by a few selected personnel.

## AIRLAND BATTLE DOCTRINE

Current U.S. Army doctrine recognizes that future success on the battlefield requires a careful blending of firepower, maneuver, and protection. Leadership provides this function:

The most essential element of combat power is competent and confident leadership. Leadership provides purpose, direction, and motivation in combat. It is the leader who will determine the degree to which maneuver, firepower, and protection are maximized; who will ensure these elements are effectively balanced; and who will decide how to bring them to bear against the enemy. [53]

The personal influence of large joint and combined force, field army, corps, and division commanders will have a major bearing on the outcomes of battles and campaigns. [54]

The skill and personality of a strong commander represent a significant part of his unit's combat power...[leaders] must know and understand soldiers and the material tools of war. [55]

Recognizing the criticality of the human element in warfare, FM 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels, is dedicated to establishing a doctrinal framework for the development of this leadership. In essence, U.S. doctrine cannot be effectively implemented without personal interaction between the leader and his soldiers at all levels of command. The doctrine articulates what the commander must do, but how the senior commander commands and controls his force is a matter of individual style. As FM 22-103 states: "Senior professionals blend the best of command, control, leadership, and management into a personal strategy for organizational success. [56]

FUTURE BATTLE

The high-intensity battlefield of the early 21st century will be an expanded version of the AirLand battlefield of

today. Modernized versions of today's direct and indirect fire weapons will have increased range, accuracy, and lethality. Attack helicopters will possess improved maneuverability and survivability. The fielding of high resolution, long range target acquisition systems will allow fires to be concentrated over larger areas of the battlefield. Therefore, close combat operations will take place from the depths of the friendly division's rear boundary to the depth of the Soviet division rear. [57] These same technological improvements will expand the limits of deep and rear battles.

Combat forces will be state-of-the-art. They will be smaller, self-sustaining formations with increased unit mobility, agility, organic firepower, and improved command and control. Enhanced weapons, to include anti-radiation and anti-tank, in a variety of configurations, will dominate the battlefield. Improved reconnaissance and target acquisition will enhance the use of maneuver by fire. Forces may be able to control terrain by fire in lieu of occupying it. The ability to locate and hit moving targets in the depth of the battlefield and the ability to track enemy maneuver formations, not in contact, will change the nature of maneuver at the operational level. To preserve its own ability to maneuver, the Army will require highly agile and mobile combined arms units, to include integrated fire support, air defense, and engineers. [58]

The human dimension of war will be critical in the early 21st century. War will fundamentally remain a contest of wills fought by men. To realize the full potential of the technology that will be introduced during this period will depend on the quality of crewmen. Combat in this environment will strain human endurance to unprecedented levels and will have a major influence on how future battles will be fought. [59]

When addressing generalship in the next century, Chris Bellamy in his The Future of Land Warfare says that the commander must be forward:

> Senior commanders will have to move and disperse more widely and more frequently than before. The commander will have to share danger, stress and physical privation with his or her subordinates, and do so for an extended, unforeseeable period. Headquarters will be susceptible to deep attack and commanders will probably have to spend long periods of time in NBC kit. This will place high demands on the commanders' physical toughness and powers of personal leadership greater that the recent past. [60]

CONCLUSION

As stated earlier, U.S. doctrine recognizes leadership as the most essential element of combat power. Therefore, the ability to achieve that correct mix of maneuver, firepower, and protection is dependent on the skills of the operational commander. He must possess technical proficiency, and thoroughly understand the capabilities of

both his organization and those supporting him. He needs
sound judgment and the appropriate analytical skills.
Dedication and commitment to the mission is required. He
must be able to exert moral force in the accomplishment of
the task. He requires communicative skills. Lastly, he
must be able to sense the effects of combat on his soldiers
and himself, and understand the impact these effects have on
mission accomplishment. [61]

While the operational commander is primarily a
generalist, he must maintain certain levels of technical
proficiency. He must be well-educated in the doctrine of
his own service and the doctrine of any supporting service.
In the event he is a combined commander, he must understand
the doctrine of his allies. Additionally, he must "know his
enemy," for he must be able to assess the capability of the
possible courses of action open to the enemy for himself.
These skills are necessary to effectively employ the forces
under his command.

The complexity and scope of modern warfare not
withstanding, the operational commander must understand the
basic capabilities of the major functional areas. However,
it is critical that his staff and his subordinates
coordinate all the major functional areas in order to
conduct synchronized operations on the battlefield.
Typically the bulk of the organization's staff will be
located at the main command post. It should be an extremely

busy place with staff officers planning, analyzing, and coordinating detailed actions. The rear command post is involved with administration and logistics. However, at the tactical command post the commander can find refuge. Normally, the tactical command post controls the close battle, thus the commander can stay attuned to the situation. Communications with his subordinates and the main command post are present. He is closer to the front, making his trips to subordinate units shorter. The command post is small and mobile, therefore it can be positioned close to a subordinate's headquarters, or wherever the commander desires. Since the Tac is small, it is easy to control access. In t.is environment, the commander can track the battle, and find the solitude he needs to keep focused on his vision and intent. Here he can plan for himself and war-game the battle with a few key staff members.

While a discussion of all the major functional areas is unnecessary, a discussion of the intelligence function is relevant. Clausewitz recognized that "many intelligence reports in war are contradictory; even more are false, and most are uncertain." [62] Even today, this observation holds true. Technological advances have not solved the problem for the more we know about the enemy, the more we want to verify what we think we know. The point is that while the intelligence analysts piece together the detailed

puzzle of enemy intentions, the commander must decide for
himself what he thinks the enemy is planning.  If the
commander is to "trust his judgment and stand like a rock,"
[63] he must use the intelligence his staff feeds him,
gather more from his subordinates, and decide for himself.
Part of this is personal reconnaissance of the battlefield
and knowing the enemy.  George C. Scott's Patton summed it
up when he said, "Rommel, you magnificent bastard, I read
your book!"

The commander's blending of scientific analysis,
experience, "gut feeling," and judgment in decision-making
is the essence of command.  Whether it's labeled as Rommel's
"sixth sense," [64] or Clausewitz's and Jomini's coup
d'oeil, the commander gets it by way of personal interaction
with his subordinate commanders at the front, and as General
Ridgway stated, "by living with the developing situation
day and night." [65]

Finally, the leader must be able to understand the
effects of battle on his soldiers and himself.  Once
again, we come back to front-line leadership. The commander
must see and be with his soldiers in their environment to
really know what they are able to accomplish.  Additionally,
this gives them that almost mystical ability to accomplish
even more.  And since the commander can't be everywhere on
the front line, he needs to have trusted representatives
there to independently assess the situation and report to

him. Montgomery and the Germans used their liaison system,
Patton used his staff officers, and Ridgway used trusted
subordinates. Lest it be forgotten, the commander must
also establish his daily routine to ensure that he has time
to himself. In this manner, he can avoid becoming a battle
casualty from exhaustion and fatigue.

While this paper doesn't provide any new or innovative
insights into senior level command and control, it confirms
that we are on track with our senior level leadership
philosophy. Our expectations that operational commanders
will lead from as far forward as practical is well grounded
in 20th century experience. This was the technique used by
the most successful commanders of World War II. By issuing
orders to the Chief of Staff and then moving out to
headquarters of subordinates, they were able to maintain a
sense of what was happening on the battlefield.
Additonally, commanders need a system of liaison officers to
go to various points on the battlefield when they can't be
there themselves. The commander needs a place to find
refuge from the constant demands on him. It should probably
be his forward command post. Here, access to him can be
limited and he can reflect on the tasks at hand. Regardless
of how automated weapon systems become, as long as battles
are fought by men, it is the technical proficiency and coup
d'oeil of the general that will dictate success or failure
in combat.

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